

## State Police tightlipped on officer-involved shooting

Written by By Mia Rose Paris & Babette Herrmann Sun Editors  
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### Fallen suspect's brother opens up about case

In the early hours of July 24, Alvin Sylversmythe was shot and killed by Gallup Police Department officer(s). Sylversmythe, 30, was reportedly intoxicated and charged at officers while wielding two knives.

The case is currently in the hands of New Mexico State Police, but as of press time, officials have yet to release the name of the officer – or officers – who fired the deadly shot.

NMSP Sgt. Chad Pierce said in an email, dated Aug. 11, that the reason the names of the officers involved in the shooting haven't been released "is due to the investigative process."

"Please remember no two investigations are the same as some take longer than others," he added.

Sylversmythe's brother, Johnathan Sylversmythe, opened up about his brother, releasing a heart-tugging statement to the Sun's editor. He spoke fondly of the good memories the two had shared, and Alvin's plans to turn his life around.

"Alvin was my brother and I loved him no matter how far apart we lived from each other, but he was also a father, brother, nephew, uncle, cousin and a friend to everyone he met," he said. "He was known for his hilarious jokes and great big hugs he would give you."

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However, Johnathan noted that Alvin struggled, and that his life was wrought with difficulties. He called “firing 6 shots” at his brother “excessive action” by police.

“I know he did not have a good track record with law enforcement, but that does not define a person alone; it’s the things that [no] one else knows that has not made the papers, records and history,” he said.

But for police officers, they often experience negative defining moments when dealing with suspects, whether it’s responding to a call or on patrol.

To give a snapshot of Sylversmythe’s interactions with Gallup officers, the department released its reports involving him Aug. 2.

### ***MAY 15, 2016***

Gallup Police Department Officer Dominic Molina was dispatched to 515 S. Clark St. in reference to a broken car window. At the scene, Molina met the victim, who said her car alarm woke her up, and when she looked out her window she could see a broken car window.

The victim believed Alvin Sylversmythe may have had someone break the window “because his girlfriend had him arrested at the residence a few days prior.”

### ***A FEW DAYS PRIOR***

Indeed, on May 12, GPD Officer Daniel Brown was dispatched to the same residence on Clark Street in reference to a burglary. A female resident told Brown that when she returned home at noon, she noticed the back door had been broken. It appeared to be kicked and bent inward.

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A DVD collection had been taken from her living room; a Play Station 3 and an Xbox were also missing.

At about 12:25 pm, the victim received a call from Sylversmythe, her ex-boyfriend and the father of her daughter. Sylversmythe told her he was going to shoot himself, and that he was sorry for what he did. He admitted to taking the items from her home.

Sylversmythe did not, and had never lived with her, she said. In March, Sylversmythe had attempted suicide at her home; she told him to stay away after that incident.

Meanwhile, Molina arrested Sylversmythe, who said he wanted “to f---ing kill himself.” He was booked on charges of burglary of a dwelling, larceny theft from a building, and criminal damage to the property of a household member.

### ***THE SUICIDE ATTEMPT***

According to a police report, on March 9, GPD Officer Anthony Seciwa responded to the above-mentioned Clark Street address in reference to a suicide attempt. Apparently, Sylversmythe had cut his wrist and was not breathing.

Other officers also responded to the address in reference to a drunk Sylversmythe threatening suicide after being depressed because of his uncle’s death.

Seciwa found Sylversmythe lying on his left side in a large pool of blood on the bathroom floor. He was breathing but appeared unconscious.

Sylversmythe’s girlfriend said everything had been fine all day; but suddenly she heard him screaming in the locked bathroom. She picked the lock and found him on the floor. He’d just

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gotten out of the hospital for alcohol withdrawals, she said.

### ***MARCH 4 DISPUTE***

Five days before the suicide attempt, GPD Officer Charles Steele was dispatched to the 515 Clark St. in reference to an allegedly drunk Sylversmythe knocking at the door.

At the scene, Steele noticed Sylversmythe sitting by the door. His girlfriend had locked him out, and he wanted to go in and go to bed, he claimed. He said his girlfriend had thrown a shoe at his face.

The girlfriend, though, said she merely wanted Sylversmythe taken to detox; she had just gotten home from a funeral, and knew nothing about his face.

### ***JULY 30, 2015***

Just over a year ago, GPD Officer Carmelita James was dispatched to 515 Clark in reference to a battery.

At around 3 pm, James arrived at the residence and met Sylversmythe, who said Randall Gordon, 54, had tried to take his car. According to Sylversmythe, Gordon was the ex-boyfriend of the woman he purchased the vehicle from. Gordon had tried to grab the steering wheel from Sylversmythe, and would not leave the vehicle.

"I'll bring war on you," Gordon allegedly told Sylversmythe, according to the report.

### ***A GRIEF STRICKEN BROTHER***

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“Following the days up until the event happened I know he was trying everything he could to make a better life for himself and his family,” Johnathan Sylversmythe said, referring to his brother Alvin.

Johnathan explained that life had dealt his brother a tough hand, and despite Alvin’s best efforts, he struggled with alcohol abuse. Johnathan held on to a bit of hope for his brother’s efforts to stop drinking, saying that when he last spoke to Alvin, he had quit drinking and was “walking a good path.”

He said Alvin was looking into obtaining his GED, and was attending 12-Step meetings to help him stay sober.

Johnathan is not clear what transpired next – whether a specific event or chain of events lead to his brother’s deadly confrontation with police.

“Whoever my brother was at that very second we may never know, but what was depicted was not how I remember him being,” he said. “He had his struggles [like] everyone else and he is a human being like all of us. I have no hate for anyone involved in this incident but the saddest part about this is I know he was trying to move onto better things ...”

Johnathan concluded by saying, “I will love him always and pray that no other family, person or being has to experience a tragic loss that results in gun fire.”

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Sun Editors***